

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**March 10, 2011**  
**Bangs Community Center: Lower Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo, Jack Wollensak

**Absent:** Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Mary Jane Laus

**Select Board Liaison:** Stephanie O'Keeffe

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:** Doris Holden (Treasurer of the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center), Evelyn Ross, Bob Schmid, Scott Merzbach (Gazette Reporter), Lillian Scott

**Welcome:** Dan Clapp, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the February 10, 2011 meeting were approved and accepted.

**FRIENDS**

**Treasurer's Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout showing \$12,130.91 in the checking account and \$82,025.37 in the investment account, plus a CD worth \$10,000.

The Friends received a gift of \$1200 from the Florence Savings Bank Customer Choice program this year.

**Donations for FY11 to date:**

**Karen** stated that since July, 2010 the Friends has received \$11,664.70 of which \$8889.81 came in just since the solicitation letter went out in the November newsletter.

The Treasurer's report was approved and accepted.

**Rosemary** reported on the Friends meeting of March 9. Plans for the Follies are underway. Businesses will be approached at the end of March about putting ads in the Follies program. Donna Lee created an attractive, colorful flyer to distribute advertising the Follies. It will appear in the next *Senior Spirit*. About ten performers are on board. There will be a bake sale at the Follies. There will be a Pasta Supper fundraiser with a preview of some of the performers on Sunday, April 10 at 6 PM at Bangs.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**Parking Proposal:**

**Jack** reported and provided a handout. The sub-committee (Joel, Jack, Alan Root and Nancy) put together a parking policy for seniors. Elders would pay \$25 annually for a sticker, which would allow them to park for up to 4 hours between the hours of 8 and 4 Monday thru Friday in the lot next to the Senior Center or in the 12 spaces near Ann Whalen. The Ann Whalen lot would be policed and those without a sticker would be ticketed. The proposal calls for an 18-month trial. The policy was submitted to the Town Manager. He suggested speaking with Claire McGinnis at Town Hall about the money collection.

**Budget Update:**

**Stephanie** spoke. The Town Manager's proposed budget was based on the worst-case scenario. State cuts to Amherst were not as deep as expected and it appears that Amherst will have \$1 million more than anticipated. Thus the Town Manager developed a "restoration list". The \$1million has to be spread between schools, libraries, reserves, etc. Requests for that \$1 million total about \$2 million. Therefore, the Budget Coordinating Group (BCG) suggested taking the request lists and 'tier' them. The Select Board developed Tier One and Tier Two lists for restoration. Tier One money would go to things that absolutely must be paid for regardless, such as Veteran's Services, overtime for Police, Fire and EMS and two new positions. Tier Two requests would be met if the money from the State were even more than \$1million, perhaps \$1.5 million.

The \$4000 to the Friends would be in Tier Two.

**Nancy** said that we have not yet heard about the EOEI Formula Grant amount anticipated for FY12. The amount of money cities and towns received in FY11 was based on \$7 per elder according to the 2000 census count. The 2010 Census is expected to show a dramatic increase in the numbers of seniors in Amherst and across Massachusetts, and since the Governor has level funded the FY12 budget, the amount per senior will drop.

**Wisdom Works Job Training:**

**Evie Ross** reported. Evie, Cynthia Moran, and John Magarian attended a training workshop on assisting seniors 55 and older in getting back into the job force. It is designed to help seniors realize their own creativity. The seniors learn

how to write resumes. They learn about going to job interviews, how to deal with questions, how to present themselves, and how to dress. The eight-hour course will be presented in four 2-hour sessions, every Wednesday in April from 2-4 PM.

Pilot programs last year in other parts of the state were very successful.

It is different from the Senior Aide program, which is for low-income individuals.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Home Safety Assessment Program with Bob Schmid:**

**Maura** introduced Bob, a retired high school guidance counselor and a carpenter. He is interested in working with seniors who want to remain in their homes. He wants to help to make their homes safe.

**Bob** said he has been working as a contractor for about 3 years. He has a contract with Franklin County Home Care serving elders. He installs grab bars, builds wheelchair ramps and checks older homes for secure railings, proper locks and doors that close properly. Bob would like to offer home assessments to people who may need improvements in their home. Bob has also helped make terraced yards safer for elders to walk and work in their yards.

**Maura** suggested creating a flyer explaining the home assessment program. An article will appear in the next *Senior Spirit*. Maura is looking into getting funding (perhaps a grant from HVES) for those elders who couldn't afford to have home safety work done.

Maura added that \$2,200 has been used from the Emergency Fund this year. There remains between \$2000 and \$3,000.

### **Nominating Committee needed for FY12 COA:**

**Dan** said there are five COA members whose terms expire in June. Of those remaining, Dan, Barbara and Jack will be on the nominating committee.

### **Amherst Media Opportunities:**

Wendy Bloomenthal was unable to attend to talk about Amherst Media. Nancy said that Amherst Media (formerly ACTV) wants to have the community use their facilities. There is an outreach effort to get people trained to use the camera and film activities at the Senior Center for TV viewing. The health seminars at the Senior Center are already being filmed.

### **Long Range Planning:**

**Nancy** reminded us that the 2010 survey showed an interest in having an Adult Social Day and a Fitness Center at Bangs. As the senior population grows with the Baby Boomers, we are hampered by space at Bangs. Nancy met with John Musante, who encouraged Nancy to get COA members to make field trips to other Senior Centers in the state, especially those in towns with a combination Senior Center and Community Center. The COA members would then make recommendations. John could make no promises about funding.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

### **SHAG (Senior Health Advisory Group):**

**Dan** reported.

Wendy Bloomenthal made a presentation about Amherst Media and explained how anyone can learn to use the new, small cameras to film their activities and programs for TV viewing - a grassroots expression of what is going on in the community.

SHAG continues with its ongoing effort to place students with seniors in the community.

*Vital Aging* is a new book recently published by a SHAG member about her experience as a clinical psychologist in helping people deal with the aging process.

Lisa White, Senior Health Services nurse, sees people not only at Bangs but also makes herself available for senior health care at the Ann Whalen and Clark House.

SHAG members would like to come to our next COA meeting to talk about their mission and their partnership with the COA. They would like to expand funding for Senior Health Services.

### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Barbara** reported. John Lutz talked about policies and procedures that need to be presented to the state annually.

The chef in their nutrition program left for another job and has been replaced. At the next HVES meeting, people will observe the preparation of meals at the Salvo House before they get distributed in the community.

**Nancy**, Stephanie and Maura met with John Lutz to try to understand some of the issues HVES is grappling with related to services for elders and the need to reassess people. There are limitations on how much money can be spent on state clients (\$266 per client per month). Balancing how much of the allotted money goes toward home care versus meals for each elder is being assessed. The case manager looks at each situation. If too much is being spent, something has to be given up by the elder, which is very difficult. HVES is running in the 'red' because guidelines to spending had not been followed prior to now. One idea being considered to help save money is to have no meal delivery on Wednesdays but to send an extra frozen meal with the Tuesday delivery. The same number of meals would go out but that would save paying the drivers for their gas on one day. Unfortunately, the elder would not be getting a well-being check on that one day. "It is a terrible reality in our country right now that we have more and more older people in need and the funding for these important services has been level funded."

**Lillian Scott** said if there is no delivery of meals on Wednesday, those elders could sign up for the RUOK call program as a well-being check for that day.

**Stephanie** has eight years of experience delivering meals. She suggested having a 'driver's meeting'. The drivers have no idea of what the money situation is or what the mechanism is for providing feedback as to which elders really need the meal or may not need the meal. The key question is whether we could find savings in the Amherst program and keep those savings. It's not just about the meal. The meal is just an entrée into the elder's life. It is a way to monitor their baseline. The HVES self-reporting assessments are very limited in their use. The drivers know each individual's situation much differently. HVES does have a driver assessment tool but it has not been utilized.

**Dan** thought it would be wise to let meal recipients know that the program is at risk and remind them of the recommended contribution of \$4.00 per day. Even if they could contribute \$1.00 per day it would be helpful.

**Karen** said that she and Evie talked about sending out an informational sheet to each meal recipient.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Maura:**

Karen created a new "Friendly Visitor" flyer, which is now available for distribution. Maura will send it to Pat Sicard at RSVP.

### **Nancy:**

The part time woman recently hired to help with the lunch program has resigned to take a full time job. Nancy hopes that Cynthia Moran will do that job as part of her tax work off program.

The new Finance Director, Sanford (Sandy) Pooler, met with Nancy yesterday. He witnessed the Bread Program and certainly observed that we operate on a 'shoestring'.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on April 7, 2011 at 9:00 AM at the Bangs Community Center.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the February 10, 2011 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.

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**Document List**

The following documents were made available to all members of the COA during the meeting. They are available for review at the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst MA.

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Minutes of February 10, 2011 meeting
3. Friends of the Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report
4. Draft of *Senior Citizen Sticker Parking Program* for the Town of Amherst
5. *Welcome to the Amherst Senior Center* informational flyer
6. *Amherst Senior Center Friendly Visitors Program* flyer